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PEPYS ON THE RESTORATION STAGE

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Mens cuiusque is est Quisque.



SIM. PETIT CAR ET LAC ANGE REGID.
LE SECRETES ADMIRALTES.

1711. 10. 11.

PEPYS ON THE RESTORATION STAGE

By
HELEN McAFEE

BENJAMIN BLOM, INC.



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FOREWORD

One would scarcely have the temerity to add to the already copious literature inspired by the immortal *Diary of Samuel Pepys* were it not that a separate presentation of the highly valuable and interesting passages relating to the Restoration stage would seem to serve a useful purpose. These passages, it is true, have been widely cited by literary historians from Genest down, and many of them have been commented upon by the several editors and critics of the *Diary*. Different writers have, however, used different, and in many cases incomplete editions—Genest, for example, basing his conclusions on that of Lord Braybrooke, first published in 1825. Moreover, since the appearance of the last and fullest edition by Henry B. Wheatley, 1893-1899, works elucidating many of Pepys's statements have been brought out. Now, therefore, that we have a version of the *Diary* in which we may be sure no detail of importance has been omitted, the time would seem to be ripe for a complete selection of all passages relating to the theatre and the drama in the decade Pepys covers—one of the most decisive in the history of the English stage—and for a re-annotation of this material in the light of recent researches as well as seventeenth-century sources. Since the latter are more or less difficult of access, the plan has been

to include in the notes the accounts of such writers as Downes, Langbaine, and John Evelyn, where they parallel Pepys. With these ends in view, and in the interest of both the student reader and the lover of the stage, this volume is presented.

Originally undertaken in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Smith College, the work has been somewhat enlarged in size and in scope for purposes of publication. The author desires to acknowledge here indebtedness to Professor George Henry Nettleton of Yale University and others who have by their criticism and interest generously assisted in its preparation. It is also a pleasure to thank Mr. Robert Gould Shaw for his courtesy in permitting the reproduction of a quaint print of a Restoration actor from the invaluable Theatre Collection in the Harvard University Library.

HELEN McAFEE.

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INTRODUCTION

I

THE CRITICS AND PEPYS'S MATERIAL
ON THE STAGE

I

THE CRITICS AND PEPYS'S MATERIAL ON THE STAGE

In his Preface to the first edition of the *Memoirs of Samuel Pepys, Esq.* (1825), Lord Braybrooke endeavored to forestall objections to the number of theatrical "notices" which the work contained. For including so many of them, he offered the twofold excuse that little was previously known "from authentic sources of the History of the Stage about the period of the Restoration," and that many of the incidents recorded by Pepys were "not to be met with elsewhere." He therefore thought himself justified, he says, "in retaining them, at the risk of fatiguing those readers who have no taste for the concerns of the Drama." In view of its subsequent reception, Lord Braybrooke's solicitude for the theatrical intelligence in the *Diary* was unnecessary. Few readers have appeared to find Pepys's accounts of his visits to the playhouse fatiguing. And from the very beginning, critics delighted to honor the information which the Diarist gives us about the Restoration stage. Unlike so many famous works, Pepys's journal, after being hidden away for a century and a half, acceded immediately on its appearance to a place in the minds and affections of the reading public. And

the entries relating to the stage were welcomed with especial warmth.

Ample evidence of this may be found in the reviews of the Braybrooke edition of the *Memoirs*, which continued to appear in the literary magazines¹ all through the latter part of 1825 and the early part of 1826. With few exceptions, contemporary reviewers were quick to acknowledge both the value and the interest of the references to the stage. Nearly a century has elapsed since these critics wrote; but in the main their verdicts have stood the test of time. In the long line of commentators who have succeeded them, are many distinguished names—Sir Walter Scott, Francis Jeffrey, Robert Louis Stevenson, William Archer, R. W. Lowe, Henry B. Wheatley, and Sir Sidney Lee,² to mention only a few. Their impressions, as well as the criticisms of certain anonymous writers, are well worth reviewing not only for their intrinsic interest but also for the light they throw on the attitude taken from time to time towards Pepys's material on the stage. Hence, by way of introduction to the present work, a brief account of the more significant of these will be presented.

The unfavorable comments, because of their extreme rarity, should perhaps be considered first. Such comments, of sufficient bulk and import to warrant notice, appeared in reviews of the *Memoirs* in

¹ A list of British periodicals in which the more important reviews discussing this aspect of the *Memoirs* appeared, will be found on pp. 327-328 of the *Bibliography*.

² See under these names in the *Bibliography* for titles.

three periodicals of the year 1825. All were obviously written by men who had "no taste for the concerns of the Drama" in the concrete form in which Pepys recorded them. Of these three criticisms the most impatient is that of an anonymous contributor to the July issue of *The Eclectic Review* published when the *Diary* had not yet been out a month. He dismisses thus curtly Pepys's "insipid and wearisome notices relating to the theatrical performances" in order to devote the remaining thirteen pages of his essay to other sides of the *Memoirs* that, frankly, engage him more. In the same vein writes another anonymous author of a lengthy notice, which has first place in the contents of *The Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature* for August, 1825. "Few," he confidently asserts, "besides those that have studied the history of the drama will take any interest in his [Pepys's] descriptions of the numberless performances that he witnessed." As might be expected from the somewhat special nature of his medium, this reviewer finds the Diarist's accounts of sermons more interesting than his records of plays.

Of a different order, though like these notices in unfavorable tone, is Francis Jeffrey's trenchant criticism which appeared, also in 1825, in the November number of *The Edinburgh Review*. After a relentlessly severe examination of Pepys's character—his "ignoble taste for dress," his "want of manliness," his "penuriousness," and his many other frailties—the critic proceeds to the dramatic comment in the *Diary*; and one cannot help feeling that Lord Jeffrey's disapproval of the man unduly colored his

view of the informal chronicler of the early Restoration stage. His concern for the moral throughout the theatrical material seems invariably to encroach upon his estimate of the value of the evidence. Of his general method the handling of the following passage is typical. In an entry of October 5, 1667, Pepys had noted in connection with a certain performance that it was "pretty" to see how Nell Gwyn "cursed for having so few people in the pit." "Now, whether it was *strange* or not," remarks Jeffrey, "it was certainly very wrong in Nell to curse so unmercifully, even at a thin house"; and he chastises Pepys roundly for seeming to approve. Hence the spirit of the whole criticism must be taken into account in approaching its final conclusions. "There is," declares Jeffrey at the end of the essay, "no *literary* intelligence of any value to be gained from this work. Play collectors will probably find the names of many lost pieces—but of our classical authors there are no notices worth naming."

Over against Lord Jeffrey's arraignment, it is instructive to set Sir Walter Scott's appreciation in *The Quarterly Review* for March, 1826, in an article on *Pepys's Memoirs*, about which he wrote to Lockhart, "The subject is like a good sirloin, which requires only to be basted with its own drippings." Scott is in agreement with the critic of the *Edinburgh* on one important point, the lack of literary taste displayed by Pepys in his comments on Shakespeare. In most other matters, the two reviewers differ—in nothing more widely than in general temper. Scott cannot mention the name of Nell Gwyn without be-

traying his greater humanity. "Pepys," writes the novelist, "in his love of wit and admiration of beauty finds room to love and admire Nell Gwynn, whose name still carries an odd fascination with it after so many generations." The *Diary* Scott regards as rich "in every species of information concerning the author's century." In short, he believes that it contains annotations "for a new edition of the *Roscius Anglicanus*,"³ and he concludes that "if the curious affect dramatic antiquities, no book published in our time has thrown so much light upon plays, playwrights, and playactors." Thus highly does the past master of the art of the novel rate the past master of the unpremeditated art of the diary.

But before Scott's estimate appeared, anonymous reviewers had already emphasized over and over again in the current periodicals the importance of Pepys's picture of the Restoration stage. Perhaps the most interesting of the favorable comments are those in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (September and October, 1825), *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* (Part II, 1825), and *The London Literary Gazette* (June 18-August 13, 1825). Although the reviewer for *The Gentleman's Magazine* does not wax enthusiastic over the *Diary* as a whole, he readily grants that Pepys "has thrown light on the dramatic history of his age." *The New Monthly Magazine* is more outspoken in its praise. "Those who are well read in the dramatic works of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Killigrew, Sedley,

³ *Roscius Anglicanus, or An Historical Review of the Stage . . . from 1660 to 1706*. [By John Downes.] 1708.

Beaumont and Fletcher, &c.," writes its critic, "will receive great pleasure from the frequent notices of the reception their works met with from the polite audiences of King Charles's day." He then proceeds to remark that the names of the famous players of the period occur in the *Diary* "as frequently as those of the heads of the treasury and exchequer, and this passion of our author has perhaps thrown more light upon the history of the stage, than is to be obtained even in Cibber's Apology, or any other contemporary work on the subject."

No writer of that day, however, made more of the *Diary*, or, indeed, of the theatrical material it contains, than the anonymous author of the nine extended notices which appeared between June 18 and August 13, 1825, in "the most influential of the purely literary weeklies"—*The London Literary Gazette*, edited by William Jerdan. In the second of these notices, the reviewer prefaces a long series of quotations dealing with the stage, with the following prophecy: "Mr. Pepys was a great playgoer, and his remarks on the first nights of plays, which now constitute our ancient drama, will be read with much interest; they also incidentally serve happily to illustrate the manners of the times." That the readers of this weekly took an even livelier interest in the material in question than the reviewer anticipated, may be inferred from the frequency with which he recurs to this theme in succeeding notices. In the *Gazette* of July 2 he is ready to "resume upon the generally pleasing topic of the drama and stage" with another copious selection of quotations. Again, in the next issue, he thinks it

worth while "to follow our last week's discourse, and set out with the drama." Indeed, not until the eighth installment, does he at length "beg leave to resume and wind up the notices connected with the Drama and state of dramatic representations in the time of Pepys." In so doing, he manages to quote about forty more passages, which added to the number of those previously cited, bring the sum total of excerpts touching the stage to over a hundred. As they are confessedly heaped up in proportion to popular relish for them, there is here eloquent testimony to the appreciation they received from the readers of 1825. As for the reviewer, it appears that he was consciously attempting to do in *The London Literary Gazette*, in an informal way, what the author of this work has attempted to do formally in the present volume. "With this we close our dramatic extracts," he comments after his final group, "which being put together, make in our opinion, a very valuable addition to the history of the stage."

Thus exploited, the dramatic and theatrical materials contained in the *Diary* pass out of the hands of the reviewer of new books into the hands of the literary historian and biographer, whose permanent possession they have long since become. Among the literary chroniclers, John Genest was the first to make use of them, on a large scale, in that landmark in the history of our drama, *Some Account of the English Stage*, published in 1832. For this reason, rather than because of what is added to the discussion, it may be of interest to recall his terse remarks: "The

Vols. is not very great in quantity, but it is highly valuable, on account of dates—and because Pepys mentions the revival of several old plays not noticed by Downes or Langbaine as having been revived.”⁴ From Genest to *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, which asserts that “the Diary contains a mine of information respecting the theatres,” comment on the subject is so frequent and so widely scattered as to make further quotation from the histories and biographies impracticable. Suffice it to say that from 1825 down, no important work bearing upon the stage of this period has failed to testify to the value of Pepys’s journal as documentary evidence. It “remains,” says Sir A. W. Ward, “of course the standard authority as to the history of the Restoration stage.” But even more striking than such acknowledgments is the silent tribute that has been paid to it by Continental as well as by English and American writers in innumerable citations from its pages.

Special mention, however, may well be made of certain studies, impetus to which has in part been given by the fuller editions of the *Diary* by Rev. Mynors Bright (1875-1879) and Mr. Henry B. Wheatley (1893-1899). It was the Bright edition that called forth Robert Louis Stevenson’s characteristic paper on *Samuel Pepys*, now included in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. Stevenson did not hesitate to affirm that Pepys both “warmly loved and understood” the stage, or to defend the Diarist in his

⁴ *Some Account of the English Stage . . .*, Bath, 1882, I, 39.

fine, spirited way against some of the aspersions that have been cast upon Pepys's attitude towards Shakespeare. In further discussion of the Diarist's entries relating to this topic, has appeared still more recently Sir Sidney Lee's notable study of *Pepys and Shakespeare*.⁵

But to Henry B. Wheatley belongs the honor in our day of having added most to our knowledge and potential appreciation of the parts of Pepys's *Diary* dealing with the stage. The results of his scholarly researches are incorporated not only in the excellent notes to his edition, but also in a chapter on the theatre in *Samuel Pepys and the World He Lived In* (1880) and in the sections in his *Pepysiana* (1899) on *Actors and Actresses* and *The Stage*. Mr. Wheatley's significant conclusions are too numerous and too detailed to admit of quotation here. They will, however, frequently be cited in the notes on the material from Pepys contained in this book, which follows the text of the admirable and now, at last, practically complete version of the *Diary* that we owe to its latest editor.

The two following introductory chapters will take up more specifically the chief facts in Pepys's account of the drama and the theatre of his day.

⁵ Included in *Shakespeare and the Modern Stage, with other Essays*, New York, 1906.

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II

PEPYS AS A DRAMATIC HISTORIAN

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PEPYS AS A DRAMATIC HISTORIAN

If, as has been said, Pepys's *Diary* is "a mine of information respecting the history of the stage," no one can complain that it has been indifferently worked. Ever since its first appearance in the incomplete edition of 1825, specialists in Elizabethan plays and in Restoration plays, students of the theatre—of its music and its manners, of the art of staging and the art of acting—have ransacked its pages, each for his particular purpose. As a result, the Diarist's name is today inseparably linked with the names of the actors, the managers, and the dramatists of his time. His casual comments have become a part of the *traditio* of the English stage.

To be specific, what Pepys has given us is a body of closely dated, firsthand evidence as to the history of the theatre in the first decade of Charles the Second's reign. Its value is enhanced by the critical importance of the time it covers. For two reasons the early years of the Restoration period are of especial interest to the student of the stage: first, because with the reopening of the playhouses after the Puritan interregnum, during which they had remained officially closed, the drama and theatre entered upon a new life; and, secondly, because during the decade of 1660-1670, as so seldom has happened, the two arts

developed side by side. Fortunately for us, our informal historian was interested in both aspects of the contemporary stage, in the production of plays as well as in the plays themselves. Thus we find in his journal accounts not only of the rise of rhymed heroic tragedy and the new "society comedy," but also of the innovations in the employment of actresses and movable scenery. He contributes alike to our knowledge of the continued popularity of pre-Restoration plays, the contemporary attitude towards Shakespeare, the minor as well as the major dramatists of the period, the vogue of French and Spanish plays in translation; and to our information about the reopening of the theatres, the personalities of the well-known people in the theatrical world—many of whom he knew intimately—and the manners and customs of the Restoration playhouses. Especially important are his accounts of the years from 1660 to 1663, of which there is elsewhere scant reliable record.

Yet certain objections have been raised from time to time to Pepys as a dramatic historian. There is, first of all, the question, Is he accurate? It cannot, of course, be shown that he invariably is. Besides, it would be too much to expect from the *Diary* scrupulous exactness in all things, for in this, no less than in other matters, standards have changed since Charles the Second's reign. Occasionally, there is a disconcerting divergence between the account of an event recorded by Pepys and that recorded by some other supposedly good authority. Thus, in referring to the opening of the Duke of York's playhouse in Lincoln's Inn Fields as having taken place late in June,

1661, the Diarist conflicts seriously with John Downes, who states that it occurred in the spring of 1662—and who had reason to know since he was prompter at this theatre. Again, Pepys twice refers to May 7, 1663, as the date of the first performance at the new King's theatre in Drury Lane, whereas according to this same Downes and a playbill—which R. W. Lowe terms “a not very astute forgery”—this performance took place on April 8. In both these cases, it looks as if either Pepys or Downes must have been misinformed, though facts may yet be brought to light which will reconcile the conflicting statements. Moreover, as rumor did not travel rapidly in an age when there were no daily newspapers, it would be strange if Pepys's information were not at times stale. We know this to be the case, for instance, with his report of Abraham Cowley's death, which he first enters under August 10, 1667, when, as a matter of fact, the poet had been dead thirteen days.

But in how many instances the Diarist's dates are actually wrong, the investigator may well-nigh despair of determining; the difficulty is that nearly all the clues, in the external evidence at least, lead in a circle and so eventually back to Pepys. This is the case with many of the statements about the early Restoration performances made by Genest. Downes and Langbaine cover the same period, it is true, but their material is rarely closely dated. Some slight basis for comparison is, however, afforded by the *Diary* of John Evelyn and a list found among the papers of Sir Henry Herbert—then Master of the Revels—of plays acted by Killigrew's company. In

several instances statements in them corroborate Pepys, and in no case do they definitely conflict with him. Pepys saw five performances at the King's theatre which are also mentioned under the same dates in the list just referred to, and records two performances of plays which are also recorded by Evelyn. It is interesting to find both the diarists giving accounts of the presentations of Tuke's *The Adventures of Five Hours*, on January 8, 1663, and of Dryden's *An Evening's Love, or The Mock Astrologer*, on June 19, 1668; and it is instructive to compare their respective comments. Few as they are, these corroborations cannot but confirm the student in the tendency to accept the dates of Pepys's journal, in the main, without question.

Another charge that has been brought against the Diarist as a dramatic historian is that he does not always give names and titles correctly—even allowing for the laxity of the age in matters of spelling. There is a reference, for example, on September 14, 1667, to a play which he calls *The Northern Castle*. No such play is known, and it seems probable that the title as Pepys gives it may have been a slip for *The Northern Lass*, a comedy by Richard Brome. Possibly, too, in certain instances, the Diarist ascribes plays to the wrong authors. He mentions on September 15, 1668, a play translated "out of French by Dryden called 'The Ladys à la Mode,'"—which may have been a mistake for Richard Flecknoe's *Damoiselles à la Mode*; and in his entry under December 10, 1663, he refers to Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*—before he has seen it, to be sure—as Sir William

D'Avenant's "story of Henry the Eighth with all his wives." But anyone who examines into the matter, will soon discover that inaccuracies such as these are, so far as can be judged, the exception.

The unique value of Pepys's comment on the Restoration stage lies, as has been said, as much in the kind as in the mere bulk of material he presents. His was indeed a many-sided interest. In intellectual and moral tolerance, where the theatre is concerned, he stands in striking contrast to his fellow-diarist Evelyn, who speaks of "very seldom going to the public theaters for many reasons," his chief complaint being against the "foule and undecent women now (and never till now) permitted to appear and act." Evelyn flattered himself on one occasion that he was "far from Puritanisme"; but he was not so far from it that moral scruples did not stand between him and a whole-hearted appreciation of what the contemporary theatre had to offer. As for Pepys, he could enjoy without let or hindrance everything about it, from Betterton's Hamlet to the orange-girls. "It is in virtue of his own desires and curiosities," says Stevenson, "that any man . . . is charmed by the look of things and people." Thus it was with Pepys at the playhouse. His curiosity was unbounded here as elsewhere. He liked to read plays on his trips to and from Deptford on Admiralty business as well as to see them at the theatre. Hence everything and everybody on the stage appealed to him. His accounts of performances are, of course, for this reason peculiarly satisfactory; if there was a single novel or exceptional fact about the play, the players,

the scenery, the music, the dancing, the audience, or the theatre itself, we feel certain that he has noted it. Whatever may be said of Pepys's critical acumen, remarks a recent writer, "no one has ever impeached his powers of observation."

The Diarist was not, to be sure, equally competent to judge in all these matters. It has been frequently charged that his criticisms of the plays are not so satisfactory as his criticisms of the acting, which seems often to have mattered to him more. In a certain instance, Pepys realized this himself. When Young, "but a bad actor at best," took Thomas Betterton's famous part in one of Pepys's favorite plays, *Macbeth*, the Diarist exclaims: "Lord! what a prejudice it wrought in me against the whole play!" But this does not mean that he was without literary taste or that he invariably judged a piece solely on its acting qualities. He could thoroughly appreciate a play like Jonson's *Catiline*, which he insisted had "much good sense and words to read," even though it appeared "the worst upon the stage, I mean, the least diverting, that ever I saw any." At any rate, he had his own theories of what was justifiable in tragedy, and of what was proper material for comedy, distinguishing between true "wit" and mere "fooling" or, as he calls it, "mirth fit for clowns." From his criticism of Etherege's *She Would if She Could*, it is evident that "witty" and "roguish" dialogue did not wholly blind him to deficiencies of plot; while in the case of Lord Orrery, whom he admired as a dramatist in many ways, he recognized the limitations which made one of his plays of "just the very same

design, and words, and sense, and plot" as every other.

Pepys's literary judgment has been questioned mainly on the ground of his attitude towards Shakespeare, which is betrayed in certain "delicious bits of criticism," as Professor Lounsbury has called them, "whose impudent inappreciativeness later critics have occasionally equalled, but whose charm they have never been able even remotely to rival." In this connection, his wholesale condemnation of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* as "the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life," and his disparaging comparison of *Othello* with Tuke's *The Adventures of Five Hours* have usually been cited. Now, although, as Stevenson says, the Diarist's failure to appreciate these and other plays of Shakespeare on the stage is not "without either parallel or excuse," there is no need to minimize its import. Yet in passing judgment, two modifying circumstances must at the same time be borne in mind—on the one hand, the nature of the record Pepys kept, which attempted to do no more than jot down among a thousand other matters first impressions of plays, and, on the other hand, the nature of the Shakespearean productions he saw. Some of these were redeemed, we know, by the acting of the Bettertons, but others must have been hopelessly inadequate. Besides, it should not be forgotten in any final appraisal that Pepys never tired of seeing *Hamlet*—even trying at one time to get "To bee or not to bee" "without book"; that he held *Henry IV* "a good play"; and that he was "mightily pleased" with *Henry VIII*. In short,

although it may be true that, as Sir Sidney Lee says, he "lived and died in complacent unconsciousness of Shakespeare's supreme excellence," there is little in his references to signify that Pepys wholly shared what has sometimes been assumed to be the conventional Restoration attitude towards Shakespeare, based upon such views as that expressed by Evelyn after seeing *Hamlet*: "Now the old plays began to disgust this refined age since his Majestie's being so long abroad."

As a dramatic historian, it should also be mentioned that Pepys was in two respects free from the prejudices of his time—or possibly, one should say, of the Court circle of his time. There is, first of all, his standpoint on the morality of the stage. This question, like the question of his feeling for Shakespeare, cannot fairly be considered apart from the general theory and practice of the *Diary* as a whole. It must be remembered that Pepys never aims at anything like such completeness or finality in his picture of a play on the stage as we are accustomed to expect from the modern dramatic reviewer. Neither is he writing for the edification of the public. He is only noting for his own private benefit the particular aspects of the production that for one reason or another stood out to him as of especial interest. Hence, quite naturally, we do not find the Diarist putting every play he sees, or indeed every play which might well be examined on this ground, to a rigid moral test. On the other hand, from the comments that Pepys makes from time to time on the moral issue, it would seem hardly

justifiable to conclude, as does a recent writer, that "Pepys criticises the plays he so loved to frequent from almost every other point of view than the moral," or yet to assert that he is never "distressfully disturbed by the improprieties afterward discovered by Collier and his successors in the theatre."¹ For one thing, he looked with disapproval upon the gross immorality of Thomas Killigrew's *The Parson's Wedding*. Even though all the world commended Dryden's *Mock Astrologer*, he did "not like it, it being very smutty." He came out positively in favor of Brome's *Jovial Crew* as "merry and the most innocent play that ever I saw"; while of Sir Samuel Tuke's *Adventures of Five Hours* he enthusiastically writes: "The play in one word, is the best . . . that ever I saw, or think ever shall, and all possible, not only to be done in the time, but in most other respects very admittable, and without one word of ribaldry." This testimony of Pepys, along with that of Evelyn, would seem to indicate that while the Court of the Merry Monarch countenanced gross immorality on the stage, and even fathered it—as Dryden later charged—the "City" was never wholly reconciled to it.

Again, Pepys's opinion differed from that which the Restoration Court is generally held to have imposed upon the contemporary stage, on the merits of the rhymed couplet for heroic plays. In a reference to *The Indian Queen*, by Dryden and Sir Robert Howard, the Diarist appears emphatically

¹ Cf. John Palmer, *The Comedy of Manners*, 1913, pp. 5-6.

against its use. "The play good," he writes, "but spoiled with the ryme, which breaks the sense."

One habit of Pepys as a playgoer works to the especial good fortune of the modern student. This is his practice of going to see the same play several times over, at intervals varying from two or three days to two or three years. And since he is more concerned with fidelity to the immediate fact than with consistency to former statements, we are thus enabled to see one play from several different angles. Often he did not come to any definite conclusion about it until the second or third performance, meantime testing his preconceived prejudices, if he had any, noting the implication of new impressions, and, in general, keeping an open mind. This is well illustrated in his various accounts of a contemporary tragedy by Thomas Porter called *The Villain*. The first time Pepys saw it, he was "never less pleased with a play in my life"; the second time, he was "better pleased with the play than I was at first, understanding the design better than I did"; and the third time he records, "The more I see it, the more I am offended at my first undervaluing the play, it being very good and pleasant, and yet a true and allowable tragedy." With Dryden's popular comedy, *Sir Martin Mar-all*, his experience was just the reverse. He first saw it on August 16, 1667, the day after its *première*, and "never laughed so in all my life"; then on August 19 and 20, still finding it "a very ingenious play, and full of variety." Six weeks later he witnesses another performance "with great delight, though I have seen it so often"; then once more before the year is out,

and three times in 1668. His enjoyment of it never lessens; the last time he mentions it, he writes: "Though I have seen it, I think, ten times, yet the pleasure I have is yet as great as ever." New details, if not fresh impressions, were generally gathered with each performance, and to his habit of seeing plays repeated, Pepys's record owes much of its value. Indeed, we are in so far indebted to the *Diarist* for this persistence in attending the theatre that we must even forgive him the absurd casuistry with which he manipulates his frequent vows to stay away.

In short, it cannot be said that Pepys was either a professed literary critic or a typical Restoration playgoer. Beyond the average man, he was open-minded and sincere in his appreciation of various types of plays, and many-sided and indefatigable in his interest in the theatre. Yet while he was too individual to subscribe in every matter to the stage conventions of the period, his power of observing closely others as well as himself, enabled him to body forth with peculiar realism the attitude of his age.

The intrinsic worth and unique interest of the evidence, as a whole, that Pepys has preserved for us can be grasped only by an examination of its full content. But perhaps the significance of a few of the comments on certain important groups of plays should be pointed out in advance.

At first glance, the entries in the *Diary* for the dramas of the pre-Restoration period point to the overwhelming popularity, during the decade succeeding the King's return, of the romances of Beau-

mont and Fletcher, over twenty-five of which Pepys saw at one time or another. A reading of his criticisms in full will show, however, that he, at least, did not admire them as he did the plays of Jonson. *The Maid's Tragedy* he found on first hearing "too sad and melancholy," though later he thought it "a good play"; and *Philaster* was "far short of my expectations." But when it came to Jonson, his praise was not thus tempered. *The Alchemist* he held to be "a most incomparable play"; he declared that *The Silent Woman* had "more wit in it than goes to ten new plays"; *Volpone* was "the best I think I ever saw." For Shirley, more of whose plays (nine in all) are referred to as being produced than any other dramatist of his period excepting Beaumont and Fletcher and Shakespeare, Pepys cared less, admiring only *The Traitor*, as "a very good Tragedy." Along with this should be mentioned Massinger's *The Bondman*, which from the *Diary* would seem to have been among the most successful plays of the time, perhaps because it provided Betterton with one of his best parts. "To the Opera," writes Pepys after a certain performance, "where we saw 'The Bondman,' which of old we both did so doat on, and do still"; and again, "There is nothing more taking in the world with me than that play." Of the twelve plays of Shakespeare which Pepys saw staged, at least eight seem to have been acted substantially unaltered, four being given in contemporary versions. From the *Diary* we learn that the general popularity of *Hamlet*, *Henry VIII*, and *Othello*, which were among the unaltered plays, should be set over against the success of D'Avenant's

Macbeth and Dryden and D'Avenant's *The Tempest* in any consideration of the Restoration view of Shakespeare.

Pepys also supplies us with significant evidence as to the brief day of rhymed heroic drama. He applauds at length the success of the Earl of Orrery's plays—said to have been written at the instigation of Royalty—*The Black Prince*, *Henry the Fifth*, and *Mustapha*, this last, "a most admirable poem, and bravely acted." At the same time he dissents from the general opinion about other plays of this type. Besides feeling that *The Indian Queen* was "spoiled with the ryme," he calls the sequel, Dryden's *The Indian Emperor*, "a good play, but not so good as people cry it up." Moreover, on April 16, 1669, he notes a bit of gossip, which in its tone would seem to presage the coming of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* and the beginning of the end of heroic drama: "I did meet with Shadwell, the poet, who, to my great wonder, do tell me that my Lord of [Orrery] did write this play [*Guzman*], trying what he could do in comedy, since his heroique plays could do no more wonders." To certain of the dramatists, that is, it was already clear that the tide had turned.

With contemporary comedy, Pepys was perhaps more in sympathy. He describes among the earliest comic successes Cowley's satirical *Cutter of Coleman Street*, under December 16, 1661, and D'Avenant's *The Wits*, under August 15, 1661. Dryden's *Sir Martin Mar-all, or The Feign'd Innocence* (1667), he esteems "the most entire piece of mirth, a complete farce from one end to the other, that certainly ever

was writ"; he records that *Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen* is "mightily commended for the regularity of it, and the strain and wit," though its success was doubtless due in a measure to the "comical part" of Florimel, done by Nell Gwyn. He has a long notice of Etherege's first play, *The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub*, January 4, 1665, which he calls "very merry"; and of his second, *She Would if She Could*, February 6, 1668, from the first performance of which "there was 1,000 people put back that could not have room in the pit," and about which the audience thought, so Pepys says, "there was something very roguish and witty." It is especially interesting to see from these entries in regard to Etherege the attitude of his contemporaries towards this first important writer of Restoration "society comedy."

If it is true that we do not understand a period until we know its minor in addition to its major writers, we must acknowledge a still further debt to Pepys's journal; for it has much to say of the lesser contemporary dramatists. The fact is that the work of mediocre men bulks as large in the *Diary* as it usually does in the estimation of the contemporary public. The plays mentioned by Pepys of the three Howards—Edward, James, and Sir Robert—of the Duke of Newcastle, Sir Charles Sedley, Thomas Killigrew, John Lacy—the actor,—Thomas Porter, Richard Rhodes, Sir Robert Stapylton, and Thomas Shadwell—all are cases in point.

The most notable seem to have owed their success largely to contemporary allusions. Such was Edward Howard's *The Change of Crowns* (1667),

in which John Lacy acted the part of the country gentleman who had the effrontery to attack "the Court with all the imaginable wit and plainness about selling places, and doing every thing for money." The King, who attended its first performance, was, we are told, so incensed at thus being abused to his face that he ordered the theatre closed and Lacy imprisoned. Finally, another actor got permission to reopen the theatre on condition that this play should not be repeated. Pepys pronounced *The Change of Crowns* "bitter indeed, but very true and witty." Curiously enough, Sir Robert Howard's *The Duke of Lerma* (1668), which, according to the Diarist, was "designed to reproach our King with his mistresses," did not arouse similar resentment in the royal spectator. Pepys fully expected that the first performance would be stopped, but although the whole Court was present, the play was allowed to take its course, and fortunately it "ended well, which salved all." Other plays, like Sedley's *The Mulberry Garden* (1668), drew crowded houses because of their author being "so reputed a wit"; and still others because, like James Howard's *All Mistaken* (1667), with its two "mad parts" immortalized by Hart and Nell Gwyn, they provided rôles that suited stage favorites. If these plays themselves have not stood the test of time, it is nevertheless instructive to learn from Pepys on what their popularity in their own day rested.

And here may be mentioned in passing the translations and adaptations referred to in the *Diary*, many from the Spanish, but most from the French, which flourished on the Restoration stage. Of the plays

from Pierre Corneille, alone, Pepys saw five, each performed several times over,—*The Cid*, *Heraclius* (“an excellent play, to my extraordinary content”), *Horace*, *The Mistaken Beauty*, and *Pompey the Great*. *The Adventures of Five Hours*, based upon a Spanish play now ascribed to Antonio Coello, was, in Pepys’s judgment, “the best, for the variety and the most excellent continuance of the plot to the very end, that ever I saw, or think ever shall.” “And the house,” he concludes, “by its frequent plaudits, did show their sufficient approbation.”

Pepys and his companions also frequently attended puppet-shows. Of these *Polichinello* (the Italian *Punch*), mentioned nine times in all, seems to have been the most popular. One performance at least was graced by “Young Killigrew” and “a great many young sparks.” After seeing *The Surprisal* at the King’s theatre, Pepys went one day “to Polichinello, and there had three times more sport than at the play.” Other puppet-plays referred to in the *Diary* are *The Modern History of Hero and Leander* (in *Bartholomew Fair*, Act V); “the story of Holofernes”; “Patient Grizill”; and the “show of Whittington.” Of the last-named, Pepys remarks: “How that idle thing do work upon people that see it, and even myself too!”

Among the dramatists of the day, we read two or three times of Abraham Cowley, who was at his death “mightily lamented” as “the best poet of our nation, and as a good man”; of Sir William D’Avenant and his difficulties as manager of the Duke’s company; and of “Dryden the poet,” whom Pepys

knew at Cambridge, and whom he saw "at the great Coffee-house," where "all the wits of the town" foregathered. The Diarist furnishes us with portraits of the unpopular Sir Robert Howard, ridiculed by Shadwell in *The Sullen Lovers*; of the popular and profligate Sir Charles Sedley, examples of whose witty repartees as a theatre-goer are carefully set down; of Tom Killigrew "the King's Foole or Jester," with his love of music and his managerial ambitions, his "raillery" and his "merry stories." Thus are the literary "lions" of the Restoration playhouse exhibited in Pepys's pages.

The next chapter will take up the conditions, as Pepys describes them, under which plays were produced by D'Avenant and Killigrew, and the information which the *Diary* gives us on the general subject of the Restoration theatre.

III

PEPYS AND THE RESTORATION
THEATRE

III

PEPYS AND THE RESTORATION THEATRE

Historically, the decade covered by Pepys's *Diary* is one of the most important in the development of the English theatre. During the first few years after the Restoration, improvements were introduced that took from the stage its essentially Elizabethan aspect and gave it those general features by which it is known today. From this standpoint, Pepys may be said to have witnessed the virtual modernization of the English theatre. To be sure, the stage itself, as in the pre-Restoration period, still projected in the shape of a platform into the pit. But on account of the regular employment of actresses for the women's parts, the general use of movable scenery, the elaboration of costumes and mechanical devices, the illumination of the stage by chandeliers of candles, and the cutting off of the front of the stage at the proscenium by flats or curtains, the Restoration theatre resembles that of our own day more closely than that of Shakespeare's. The placing in front of the pit of a regular band of musicians, with the growing tendency towards more ambitious music both during and between the acts, also contributed to "this transformation," as Professor Thorndike has called it, "from a half-medieval to a nearly modern

stage.”¹ As for the auditorium of the Restoration playhouse, its plan was in general similar to that of the typical London theatre of the present time. There was the pit—somewhat curtailed, to be sure, by the protrusion of the stage; above it the first tier of boxes with the King’s box occupying the centre; then the so-called “middle gallery” with a few boxes also, perhaps, in the centre; and finally above that the shilling gallery with benches for the poorer class of playgoers.

On nearly every one of the essential features of the contemporary theatre, Pepys touches at some point in his record. Thus from the pages of the *Diary*, it is possible to reconstruct in their main outlines the important playhouses of the period as well as the productions that took place in them.

The first time that Pepys refers to the performance of a play is on June 6, 1660; he is still on board *The Charles*—the ship which had just brought over the King and was lying off Dover—when he hears in a letter from London that “The two Dukes [York and Gloucester] do haunt the Park much, and that they were at a play, *Madame Epicene*, the other day.” It is not clear where this performance of Jonson’s comedy was given—perhaps at the Red Bull where the company of “old actors,” to whose repertory it belonged, was then playing. On November 8 of this year, a company containing recruits from the Red Bull removed to a theatre in Vere Street, Clare Market, where in all probability Pepys saw the

¹ A. H. Thorndike, *Tragedy*, p. 244.

same play on December 4. The Diarist's statements throw much light upon the early history of the theatres opened immediately before the Restoration. Besides the Red Bull in St. John's Street, there is valuable information about the Cockpit in Drury Lane, and the rebuilt Salisbury Court theatre, Whitefriars—as well as about the companies of actors that gathered in them—though not enough to solve satisfactorily all the problems connected with these subjects. After the Royal grant of August 21, 1660, to Thomas Killigrew and Sir William D'Avenant of "full power and authority to Erect two Companies of Players" and the consequent formation of "the King's company" by Killigrew, and of "the Duke of York's" by D'Avenant—the comments upon them are more frequent. Thereafter the reader may follow somewhat closely their movements until they were established in the quarters they were to occupy throughout the period covered by the remainder of the *Diary*—the King's players in the Royal theatre, Drury Lane, the Duke's in the "Opera" in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Pepys also adds substantially to our knowledge of the Royal private theatre in Whitehall Palace. As this is a subject which has been generally passed over by stage historians, it is important to summarize the information he supplies. On November 20, 1660, he refers to the Cockpit, Whitehall, which stood, according to Edgar Sheppard, author of *The Old Royal Palace of Whitehall*, on the site "now occupied by the Privy Council Office." Pepys saw several plays acted here by both the Duke's and the King's

companies, who, since the performances at the public theatres were in the afternoon, were free to appear at Court in the evening. He mentions this Cockpit for the last time by name on January 5, 1663. On February 23, 1663, and October 17, 1664, he speaks of plays given "at Court," without indicating definitely the place of performance. On April 20, 1665, he remarks: "I am told the first play is played in Whitehall noon-hall, which is now turned to a house of playing"; and in his next entry on the Court plays, which is in 1666, after the great plague, he says: "To Whitehall and into the new playhouse there, and the first time I was ever there." From these references, it is clear that the "theatre-room" in the palace was moved about. Sheppard has nothing to say on the subject except that the location of the "noon-hall" (which seems to be the "new playhouse" Pepys mentions) is not known. H. B. Wheatley, in his *London, Past and Present*, asserts that "Charles built a new playhouse at Whitehall to which Pepys went." From this evidence, we may at least infer that the Court plays were given in the Cockpit adjoining the old palace (not to be confused with the Cockpit in Drury Lane) for the first three or four years of Charles the Second's reign, and also that from 1665 on they were probably given in what had previously been known as the "noon-hall."

Pepys first saw professional actresses at the King's theatre, Vere Street, on January 3, 1661, soon after the initial appearance of women on the English stage, if we except a few sporadic pre-Restoration performances. "To the Theatre," he records of the

performance of this date, "where was acted 'Beggar's Bush,' it being very well done; and here the first time that ever I saw women come upon the stage." That their advent was not wholly pleasing to the actors of this company is suggested in the following reference in their petition of October 13, 1660, addressed to Sir Henry Herbert. Killigrew, they assert, "supprest us untill we had by covenant obleiged ourselves to Act with Woemen." Boys, however, still appeared in female rôles in the same company, as we learn from the Diarist's entry for January 7, which praises Edward Kynaston's acting of Epicoene in Jonson's *Silent Woman*. The second time Pepys mentions seeing women on the stage, which was on January 8—again at the King's theatre—the play was *The Widow*, and his pleasure in it was lessened because the women were "to seek in their parts." But after his third experience, February 12, he thought the acting of a woman, in *The Scornful Lady*, made "the play appear much better than ever it did to me." Some five years later in an account of *The English Monsieur*, his chief praise is reserved for the actresses who performed in it—"the women," he concludes, "doing better than ever I expected, and very fine women."

Unfortunately, Pepys does not furnish us with a clue to the name of the first English professional actress to take a speaking part; but through his descriptions, we become more or less intimately acquainted with the principal actresses of both the Duke's and the King's companies, who were soon afterward employed. Among these were Mrs. Corey,

Mrs. Betterton, the two Davenports, "Moll" Davis, Gosnell (who is not known outside the *Diary*), the famous Nell Gwyn, Mrs. Knepp (of whom little is otherwise known), the Marshall sisters, and Mrs. Norton.

It was Mrs. Corey, or "Doll Common"—as Pepys calls her from her part in Jonson's *Alchemist*—who deeply offended Lady Harvey by her "acting of Sempronia in 'Catiline' to imitate her." "For which," continues Pepys, "she got my Lord Chamberlain, her kinsman, to imprison Doll: when my Lady Castlemayne made the King to release her, and to order her to act it again, worse than ever, the other day, where the King himself was: and since it was acted again, and my Lady Harvy provided people to hiss her and fling oranges at her." As for the sequel, we are told that there were "real troubles at Court about it."

Mary Saunderson, who became in 1662 the wife of Betterton—prince of Restoration actors—is almost invariably mentioned in the same breath with her husband in terms of the highest praise. She first appears in the *Diary* in an account of a performance of Massinger's *The Bondman*, as "acting Cleora's part very well now Roxalana is gone." The original Roxalana was Elizabeth Davenport, whose impersonation of this rôle in the famous production of *The Siege of Rhodes*, lingered in Pepys's memory long after the impersonator had been "by force of love," as Downes says, "erept the stage." Of Moll Davis, "the pretty girle that sang and danced so well at the Duke's house," and "pretty witty Nell at the

King's house," there is abundant gossip. Pepys gives us glimpses of the latter off the stage as well as on it—"standing at her lodgings' door in Drury-Lane in her smock sleeves and bodice," and also in the "women's shift where Nell was dressing herself, and was all unready, and is very pretty, prettier than I thought." Her own opinion of her abilities as an actress seems largely to have been shared by the Diarist. He asserts, apropos of her spoiling the part of Samira in *The Surprisal* and then two days later playing to perfection Mirida in *The Mad Couple*, that it is a miracle to him "to think how ill she do any serious part, as, the other day, just like a fool or changeling; and, in a mad part, do beyond all imitation almost." But pretty, "mad-humoured" Mrs. Knepp, whom Killigrew, her manager, thought "like to make the best actor that ever come upon the stage," figures even more often in these gossip pages in her double capacity of successful actress and intimate friend.

Pepys's accounts of the visits back and forth between the audience and the women players suggest that the but recently initiated actresses felt themselves from the first at home both on the stage and in the pit. The "gallants" and the women of the company were upon a most informal footing. On one occasion, Mrs. Knepp took the Diarist after a play up into "the tiring-rooms" at the King's theatre, where he proceeded to hear Knepp say "all her part of Flora's Figarys"; another time, she spied him "out of the tiring-room and come to the pit door." Again, Pepys records that Knepp "come, after her song in the

clouds, to me in the pit." And at all times, "Orange Moll," the head orange-girl, acted as a go-between for the men in the auditorium and the actresses on the stage.

Pepys also testifies that the managers of the Restoration theatres soon learned to exploit the women of their companies in ways calculated to add a new zest to playgoing for the vulgar-minded. As early as October 28, 1661, we read of a woman who "acted Parthenia" in *Argalus and Parthenia*, and "came afterwards on the stage in men's clothes"—probably to recite a coarse epilogue. And on October 4, 1664, Pepys hears of Killigrew's *The Parson's Wedding*, which he calls a "bawdy loose play," about to be "acted all by women."

To turn from the women to the men of the companies—by the end of February, 1661, hardly two years after the reopening of the theatres, we find Pepys already observing that "the gallants do begin to be tyred with the vanity and pride of the theatre actors who are indeed grown very proud and rich." How difficult they were to deal with appears from the following story. Under July 22, 1663, we read of the versatile comedian, Henry Harris, a member of D'Avenant's company: "He demanded £20 for himself extraordinary, more than Betterton or anybody else, upon every new play, and £10 upon every revive; which with other things Sir W. Davenant would not give him, and so he swore he would never act there more in expectation of being received in the other House; but the King will not suffer it." Finally, as Pepys tells us on December 10, Harris was



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N. F. French, Publisher

M^r Thomas Betterton
Totus Mundus Agit Austrionem.

forced to go back to his old place. But it was doubtless as much the fault of the public as his own that he was thus spoiled, to judge by an entry for April 29, 1668: "After the play done, I stepped up to Harris's dressing-room, where I never was, and there I observe much company come to him, and the Witts, to talk, after the play is done, and to assign meetings."

Another crisis arose when the popular comedian Lacy insulted Edward Howard—for acting in whose play he had been thrown into prison—telling him "he was more a fool than a poet," and giving him "a blow over the pate." An artist like Betterton, who was always dignified, and was universally respected and admired, lived apparently in peace and quiet. But there were other more turbulent spirits who not infrequently became involved in quarrels that necessitated the temporary closing of their play-houses. That the actors did not always triumph over their opponents, we may infer from the fact that after Kynaston had taken a part in a play called *The Heiress* "in abuse to Sir Charles Sedley," he was "exceedingly beaten with sticks by two or three that assaulted him." The Diarist also records a sinister-sounding threat made by Sir William Coventry, when it was rumored that he was to be mimicked on the stage. He immediately "told Killigrew that he should tell his actors whoever they were, that offer any thing like representing him . . . that he would cause his nose to be cut."

Of all the actors mentioned in the *Diary*, Thomas Betterton of the Duke's company seems most to have

impressed Pepys, and in no rôle so much as in Hamlet. "Betterton did the prince's part beyond imagination" is a typical comment. Next to him stands Henry Harris in the estimation of the Diarist, who knew him personally perhaps better than any of the others. Besides inviting him frequently to his house, Pepys had his portrait painted as Henry V in Orrery's play of that name. Not only did he admire Harris's acting, but again and again he praises his intelligence, his wit, and his personal charm. "I do not know another better qualified for converse," we read, "whether in things of his own trade, or of other kinds, a man of great understanding and observation and very agreeable in the manner of his discourse, and civil as far as is possible." Of the actors in the King's company (which, on the whole, is not rated as high as its rival) we hear most about the versatile John Lacy. Lacy seems to have excelled in "character parts" such as a rustic "clown" in *Love in a Maze* and the "country-gentleman come up to Court" in *The Change of Crowns*. He appears also to have had a special gift for portraying national characteristics, for we read of his taking such diverse parts as "the French Dancing Master," an "Irish footman," and "Sawney the Scot." How much French and Irish he managed to speak is not told, but we know that he at least attempted Scotch, since as Sawney he succeeded in making himself quite unintelligible to Pepys. Edward Kynaston, of the King's company, also frequently receives honorable mention. He was one of the last of the "boy-actresses," and immediately after the Restoration Pepys twice

praises him in women's parts. As Olympia in *The Loyal Subject*, he made—so the Diarist assures us—“the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life, only her voice not very good.” As Epicoene in *The Silent Woman*, he was “clearly the prettiest woman in the whole house.”

Several times Pepys speaks of children on the stage, but does not give their names. In *The Slighted Maid*, he saw a little girl dance in boy's apparel; and in *The Sullen Lovers* “a little boy, for a farce, do dance Polichinelli the best that ever anything was done in this world.” During the performance of *All Mistaken, or The Mad Couple* occurred an incident which must have been as embarrassing to Nell Gwyn and the rest of the company as it was entertaining to the Diarist. “It pleased us mightily,” he writes, “to see the natural affection of a poor woman, the mother of one of the children brought on the stage: the child crying, she by force got upon the stage, and took up her child and carried it away.”

Pepys usually notices the staging of plays, if there is anything novel or interesting about it. During the first two or three years after the Restoration, when movable scenery was practically an innovation in the London theatres for regular productions, the Diarist often puts down the mere presence of scenes as a noteworthy fact. The historically important setting for D'Avenant's *Siege of Rhodes*, Part II, which he saw on July 2, 1661, at the new “Opera” in Lincoln's Inn Fields, he describes as “very fine and magnificent.” On August 15 he attended a performance, also at this theatre, of *The Wits*, “never acted yet

with scenes"; and there, on the twenty-fourth of this month, a performance of *Hamlet*, "done with scenes very well." Only in commenting upon *Henry VIII* among the other plays of Shakespeare which were revived at this time with elaborate settings, does Pepys mention the scenery, in two of them his attention being taken up by the music. But he was "mightily pleased" with the "shows" of *Henry VIII*. He admired in Jonson's *Catiline* the scene "of the Senate," and in Fletcher's *Island Princess*, the "good scene of a town on fire." He listened with great interest in August, 1664, to the ambitious plan which Thomas Killigrew divulged to him for a new theatre which was to "have the best scenes and machines, the best musique, and every thing as magnificent as is in Christendome; and to that end hath sent for voices and painters and other persons from Italy." But the contemporary interest in this side of theatrical production may perhaps best be gauged from the Diarist's entry for June 13, 1663, after he had seen *The Faithful Shepherdess*, which he says was "much thronged after, and often shown, but it is only for the scene's sake, which is very fine indeed and worth seeing." In spite of these ambitious efforts of D'Avenant and Killigrew, Restoration scenery was, of course, artistically crude, and it is therefore not surprising that distance should have lent it enchantment. When forced to sit in an "upper box," Pepys observes with some interest, that "from this place the scenes do appear very fine indeed, and much better than in the pit."

One day in 1666, when the theatres were closed on

account of the great fire, which followed on the heels of the great plague, Pepys consoled himself by going behind the scenes at the King's playhouse and viewing at close range the stage properties. There he saw the "machines," the "paintings," and various other appurtenances—"here a wooden leg, there a ruff, here a hobby-horse, there a crown, would make a man split himself to see with laughing." But the actors at this time did not always have to ride hobby-horses; in Shirley's *Hyde Park*, at the King's theatre, Pepys saw real horses brought on the stage.

As for costumes, the Diarist particularly commends the richness of those in *The Tempest*, and in *Catiline*; for the latter play, he notes that the King was to give five hundred pounds, and that there were to be "sixteen scarlett robes." But when he visits the tiring-rooms at the Royal theatre, and sees there "Lacy's wardrobe and Shotrell's," he is amazed "to think how fine they show on the stage by candlelight and how poor things they are to look now." It has been said that "such costumes as Pepys saw made no pretension whatever to historical accuracy." Of course, the point of view towards historical accuracy is shifting ground, and "the garments" Pepys thought "like Romans very well" would probably not satisfy a modern theatre-goer's sense of archæological fitness. But *pretension* to historical accuracy there certainly was when the *Diary* was written. To substantiate this it is only necessary to quote further from the account of the performance of March 8, 1664, in which the "Romans" appeared (the play was a translation of Corneille's *Heraclius*): "At the

drawing up of the curtaine, there was the finest scene of the Emperor and his people about him, standing in their fixed and different postures in their Roman habitts, above all that ever I yet saw at any of the theatres." And we read in the description of a piece called *Queen Elizabeth's Troubles* that it "shews the true garbe of the Queen in those days just as we see Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth painted."

But Pepys was probably more genuinely interested in the music than in the costuming of plays. "That which did please me beyond anything in the whole world," he writes after seeing *The Virgin Martyr* at the King's theatre, "was the wind musique when the angel comes down, which is so sweet that it ravished me." He often comments on the rendering of the songs, which were as frequent a feature of Restoration performances as the dances, and he was enough of a musician to write his own score for one of them, "Beauty Retire," from *The Siege of Rhodes*. When the theatre in Drury Lane was opened, in 1663, Pepys remarks on the new arrangement of having the music down in front of the pit instead of up in a gallery. But at first at least, this did not seem to work well. "The musique being below," he says, "and most of it sounding under the very stage, there is no hearing of the bases at all, nor very well, of the trebles, which sure must be mended." Apparently D'Avenant did not adopt this arrangement, for as late as 1669 Pepys refers to "the side balcony" at the Duke's theatre "over against the musick."

About the musicians, we learn from various entries that the most popular of them were foreigners.

Thomas Killigrew, who was so fond of music that he had been several times to Rome to hear it, led the way in importing them. He once told Pepys that before his time "‘Hermitt poore’ and ‘Chevy Chese’ was all the musique we had; and yet no ordinary fiddlers get so much money as ours do here, which speaks our rudenesse still." In his effort to improve this state of things, he had "gathered our Italians from several Courts in Christendome, to come to make a concert for the King." According to his own account, the orchestra in his theatre contained "nine or ten of the best" fiddlers; while from Pepys's remarks on Killigrew's production of *The Virgin Martyr*, we infer that it also contained wind instruments. It appears from the *Diary*—as well as from other sources—that Sir William D’Avenant did his full share in his operatic productions towards bettering the music in the Restoration theatre.

As Pepys pictures the stage to us, so too he pictures the auditorium of the contemporary playhouse, peopling pit and gallery with the quaintly interesting figures of the day. Especially does he rejoice in the presence of "all the great ladies of the Court." "The sight of the ladies, indeed," he remarks of a particular audience, "was exceedingly noble." When it is "full of citizens," the theatre does not please him as much as it does when it is "full of gallants." He takes solid satisfaction when there are "many fine faces" in the pit, and is somewhat disturbed when he notices, as on January 1, 1668, at the Duke's playhouse, "that when I begun first to be able to bestow a play on myself, I do not remember that I saw so many by